



2010 Meetings

Monday, November 22	Movie Night - Sustainable Sandhills is lending us the movie “King Corn” for us to show (similar to our showing of “Dirt” a few months ago). Movie trailer at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pr5HQrgg9mM
December	No Meeting.
Monday, January 24	TBD

Meeting Times: 7:00 p.m. - Fellowship and Socializing. 7:30 p.m. - Meeting and Program.
Program Location: Weymouth Woods Visitors’ Center Auditorium.
Phone 910-692-2167 for directions.

*** We normally meet on the 4th Monday of each month. ***

Upcoming Field Trips

We are in a state of transition from Scott planning and leading most of the trips to a committee of folks doing the job. As soon as we have field trips scheduled, we will get them out in an e-mail and updated on the website.

IMPORTANT: Call or -email the field trip leader to register for a trip. Please do so at least one day before the trip to ensure that the trip is still on schedule.

Trip Leaders Needed

I receive a lot of trip ideas from members; what I need are members to lead these trips. You don’t have to be an expert to lead a trip. You just need to be willing to schedule, meet, and do the logistics. I know many of you are much better at this than I am! So please consider leading one of the following:

Falls Lake-Triangle Lakes for waterfowl

Uwharrie National Forest
Canoe/Kayak – Black River/Lumber River, etc.
Bay Lakes
Bog Turtle search

Trip Reports

Longvalley Farm: Wildflowers and Birds October 9

Leader: Bruce Sorrie

Five participants joined Bruce Sorrie and Cassie Willis for a day of fall birding and botany at soon-to-be Carvers Creek State Park in Cumberland/Harnett Counties. This property was for decades owned by Stillman Rockefeller as a winter retreat, where he and his family would immerse themselves in nature, take long walks, go fishing, go horseback riding, etc. The property was sold to TNC, which in turn has sold it to NCDENR as part of a new state park.

The weather was picture-perfect, with blue skies and seasonable temperatures. Birds responded by being active throughout the morning. The fields and shrub thickets along the entrance road were hopping with Common Yellowthroats, Brown Thrashers, Eastern Towhees, and sparrows. At least three Loggerhead Shrikes and a couple of American Kestrels hunted from atop small trees. Especially interesting was seeing a couple of juvenile plumage Red-headed Woodpeckers, looking very drab until they flew, showing big white wing patches. A late Eastern Wood-Pewee gave us very close looks.

In the plant department, we saw some very large Longleaf Pine, also some Shortleaf Pine, and lots of Pond Cypress in the millpond. The drought has reduced this autumn's wildflower display, but we found several Blue Catesby's Gentian, some goldenrods, Eupatoriums, and a population of the state rare Cuthbert's Turtlehead (*Chelone cuthbertii*), with pink flowers.

After lunch by the cypress pond, we trekked upstream to the swamp forest, where we managed to get in as far as the main creek—and to a cottonmouth who eyed us coolly. Many of the Loblolly Pines, Pond Cypress, and Swamp Black Gums were impressively large. Hopefully the state can put a boardwalk through this magnificent habitat.

Bird

Red-tailed Hawk	Brown-headed Nuthatch
American Kestrel	Carolina Chickadee
Turkey Vulture	Tufted Titmouse
Canada Goose	American Robin
Killdeer	Eastern Bluebird
Mourning Dove	Carolina Wren
Belted Kingfisher	Northern Mockingbird
Downy Woodpecker	Brown Thrasher
Northern Flicker	Common Yellowthroat
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Pine Warbler
Red-headed Woodpecker	Palm Warbler
Pileated Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
Eastern Phoebe	Chipping Sparrow
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Field Sparrow
Blue Jay	Swamp Sparrow
American Crow	Eastern Towhee
Fish Crow	Northern Cardinal
Loggerhead Shrike	Common Grackle
White-breasted Nuthatch	



Above:

Cottonmouth and Horntail wasp ©Cassie Willis

Left: Field trip attendees and *Gentiana Catesbaei*
©Bruce Sorrie



Photography Spotlight

As my last newsletter goes out, I decided it was OK to share something different (clearly not in the Sandhills!). This is Courthouse Falls in the NC Mountains. ©BradyBeckPhotography 2010



Upcoming SNHS Elections

At the November meeting we will be electing a new President and Member at Large. We have only one candidate for each office, so it should be a quick vote! Bruce Sorrie has agreed to serve as our next President, and Alicia Jackson has agreed to serve another term as Member at Large. Thanks to both of you for agreeing to serve!

Of This and That

As many of you know, Charlie Jones is in Iraq, supporting our troops. Here's an article he wrote for his Bird Brain column in the KBR newsletter in Iraq. Thought you might find it interesting. -- Linda Jones

Since our mission is to support our troops in Iraq, I thought you might like to know how birds have also supported combat troops. We all know KBR's slogan is "We Deliver," but I'll wager it was a pigeon that first coined that phrase! As you walk around, you see pigeons everywhere, so you probably don't get too excited about them; but wait till you read what this ubiquitous avian has done in wartime.

The most famous pigeon in World War I was *Cher Ami*, who worked for the Army Signal Corps in France. His feats included delivering 12 important messages and saving the Lost Battalion of the 77th Division in the Battle of Argonne. The pigeon was shot in the breast in its last mission, but still managed to deliver its message. *Cher Ami* was awarded the *Croix de Guerre* for its bravery.

The most famous pigeon in World War II was *GI Joe*, who worked for the U.S. Army Pigeon Service in Italy. This bird is credited with making the most outstanding flight by a USA Army Pigeon in World War II—making the 20-mile flight from British 10th Army HQ in the same number of minutes. It brought a message to the Allied Forces to tell them that the village had already been captured by the British Forces, so there was no need to bomb the village as had been planned. *GI Joe* was awarded the Dickin Medal for Valor.



The Dickin Medal for Valor is an award exclusively given to animals that have performed heroic deeds. The Dickin Medal was instituted in 1943 in the United Kingdom by Maria Dickin to honor the work of animals in war. Maria Dickin was the founder of the *People's Dispensary for Sick Animals* (PDSA), a British veterinary charity. She established the award for any animal displaying conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty while serving or associated with the British Commonwealth armed forces or civil emergency services. It is a bronze medallion, bearing the words "*For Gallantry*" and "*We Also Serve*" within a laurel wreath, carried on ribbon of striped green, dark brown, and pale blue. The award is commonly referred to as "*The Animals' Victoria Cross*". The medal was awarded 54 times between 1943 and 1949, to 32 pigeons, 18 dogs, 3 horses, and a cat, to acknowledge actions of gallantry or devotion during the Second World War. The most recent animal to be honored is Treo, a black Labrador, honored for his "heroic actions as an arms and explosives search dog in Afghanistan." As of March 2010, the Dickin Medal has been awarded 63 times.

In World War II, 32 different pigeons received the award - more than any other animal. The first recipients of the award, in December 1943, were three pigeons, serving with the Royal Air Force, all of whom contributed to the recovery of air crew from ditched aircraft during the Second World War.

William of Orange was a male pigeon soldier of MI14 (British Secret Service). He was awarded the 21st Dickin Medal for delivering a message from the Arnhem Airborne Operation. Communications in that battle were

a problem for the Allied units; German troops had surrounded the airborne forces and their few remaining radio sets malfunctioned. *William of Orange* was released by British soldiers at 10:30 on September 19, 1944, and arrived at his nest box in England at 14:55. He flew over 400 km (250 mi.) and the message he carried was one of the few to make its way back to the United Kingdom. This message saved more than 2,000 soldiers combined at the time of the Battle of Arnhem in September 1944. The bird's official name in military records is, NPS.42.NS.15125. He received the medal in May 1945.

Don't Forget...

To check the SNHS web site (www.sandhillsnature.org) for information on last-minute field trips and/or changes in already scheduled ones. There you'll find a link to the Sandhills Natural History Society facebook page which also has all the latest information.

Dues – Dues are \$5.00 per person, per year. The dues year is from January 1 through December 31. Please mail your check for \$5.00, payable to “Sandhills Natural History Society,” to Carol Bowman, Treasurer, at:

Sandhills Natural History Society
P.O. Box 1472
Southern Pines, NC 28388-1472

Please include your address, telephone number, and e-mail address with your payment.

Recycle your nature, birding, or gardening magazines at each monthly meeting. There will be a table where you can drop off or pick up magazines of interest to our group.

TEES AND LANDS' END CAPS – SNHS merchandise can be purchased at our monthly meetings. Contact David Kilpatrick at 910-295-5224 or at snhslogo@mac.com if you have any questions.

\$10	T-shirts
\$17	Baseball Caps (with embroidered logo)
\$14	Baseball Caps (with plain logo)
\$12	Mugs
\$ 3	Stickers

SNHS Board of Directors 2010:

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C/o Weymouth Woods Nature Preserve
1024 N. Fort Bragg Road
Southern Pines, NC 28387

ATTENTION!!!

If you have e-mail and are experiencing trouble receiving all the newsletters and announcements via e-mail, please contact Chris Norkus immediately. info@sandhillsnature.org

If you do not have e-mail, please read this:

Our field trips often have schedule changes and we send out e-mail updates to the membership. We suggest you ask a friend who receives these emails to keep you informed. You can also periodically call the field trip leader to get the latest updates. You can also check out the SNHS web site at www.sandhillsnature.org.